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## **The Character Strengths Rating Form (CSRF): Development and initial assessment of a 24-item rating scale to assess character strengths**

Ruch, Willibald ; Martínez-Martí, María Luisa ; Proyer, Rene T ; Harzer, Claudia

**Abstract:** Character strengths are morally, positively, valued traits that are related to several positive life outcomes. In this study, the Character Strengths Rating Form (CSRF), a 24-item rating form of character strengths based on the classification proposed by Peterson and Seligman (2004), was developed using the data of 211 German-speaking adults. The CSRF yielded good convergence with Peterson and Seligman's Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS) in terms of descriptive statistics, relationships with socio-demographic variables, and associations with life satisfaction; the means correlated .91, and standard deviations correlated .80. Correlations between corresponding strengths in the CSRF and the VIA-IS were between .41 and .77. Rank-order correlations of the correlations of both measures with age, education, and life satisfaction were .74, .76, and .84, respectively. Factor structure congruence coefficients ranged between .92 and .99. The rank-order correlation of the associations of the 5 factors with life satisfaction was .90. The CSRF proved to be a valid instrument for the assessment of character strengths. Its use is recommended for a brief measurement of character strengths when economy of instruments is at a premium (e.g., in large-scale longitudinal studies).

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# Social Indicators Research

## The Character Strengths Rating Form (CSRF): Development and Initial Assessment of a 24-Item Rating Scale to Assess Character Strengths --Manuscript Draft--

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Abstract:	<p>Character strengths are morally positively valued traits that are related to several positive life outcomes. In this study, the Character Strengths Rating Form (CSRF), a 24-item rating form of character strengths, based on the classification proposed by Peterson and Seligman (Peterson, C., &amp; Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification. Washington, DC: APA) was developed and evaluated. The sample consisted of 211 German-speaking adults. Convergence of the CSRF and Peterson and Seligman's Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS) was very high in terms of descriptive statistics, relationships with socio-demographic variables, and life satisfaction as well as factor structure. Means correlated .91 (rank-order correlation was .85), and standard deviations correlated .80. The correlations between the corresponding strengths in the CSRF and in the VIA-IS were between .41 and .77 (median was .56), and they all were higher than the correlations with the remaining strengths. The rank-order correlations of the correlations of both measures with age, education, and life satisfaction, were .74, .76, and .84, respectively. When comparing the factor structure, Tucker's Phi congruence coefficients' ranged between .92 and .99 (median = .96). The rank-order correlation of the associations of the 5 factors with life satisfaction was .90. The CSRF proved to be a valid instrument for the assessment character strengths. Its use is recommended when the full VIA-IS cannot be used (e.g., in large-scale longitudinal studies).</p>

The Character Strengths Rating Form (CSRF):

Development and Initial Assessment of a 24-Item Rating Scale to Assess Character Strengths

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Running head: Character Strengths Rating Form

The Character Strengths Rating Form (CSRF):

Development and Initial Assessment of a 24-Item Rating Scale to Assess Character Strengths

### Abstract

Character strengths are morally positively valued traits that are related to several positive life outcomes. In this study, the Character Strengths Rating Form (CSRF), a 24-item rating form of character strengths, based on the classification proposed by Peterson and Seligman (Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*. Washington, DC: APA) was developed and evaluated. The sample consisted of 211 German-speaking adults. Convergence of the CSRF and Peterson and Seligman's Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS) was very high in terms of descriptive statistics, relationships with socio-demographic variables, and life satisfaction as well as factor structure. Means correlated .91 (rank-order correlation was .85), and standard deviations correlated .80. The correlations between the corresponding strengths in the CSRF and in the VIA-IS were between .41 and .77 (median was .56), and they all were higher than the correlations with the remaining strengths. The rank-order correlations of the correlations of both measures with age, education, and life satisfaction, were .74, .76, and .84, respectively. When comparing the factor structure, Tucker's Phi congruence coefficients' ranged between .92 and .99 (median = .96). The rank-order correlation of the associations of the 5 factors with life satisfaction was .90. The CSRF proved to be a valid instrument for the assessment character strengths. Its use is recommended when the full VIA-IS cannot be used (e.g., in large-scale longitudinal studies).

*Keywords:* character strengths; positive psychology; test development; VIA-IS; rating form

### The Character Strengths Rating Form (CSRF):

#### Development and Initial Assessment of a 24-Item Rating Scale to Assess Character Strengths

## 1. Introduction

Positive psychology focuses on the conditions and processes that enable human flourishing and optimal functioning (Gable and Haidt 2005). Three broad topics are at the center of positive psychology: positive subjective experiences, positive individual traits, and positive institutions (Peterson 2006). Peterson and Seligman (2004) revived psychology's abandoned interest in the study of character strengths and virtues. They propose a classification (known as the *Values in Action* classification of strengths) of six hierarchically higher ordered universal virtues and 24 more specific character strengths (see Appendix I). Each of the strengths is assigned to one virtue and this assignment was based on theoretical grounds as opposed to an empirically driven approach. Peterson and Seligman (2004) proposed ten criteria that a positive trait had to fulfill to be considered as strength of character (e.g., it is fulfilling, it is morally valued in its own right, etc.). Character strengths are the psychological ingredients of the virtues, i.e., the distinguishable routes in which one or another of the virtues are displayed. For example, the authors argue that the virtue of transcendence can be achieved through the practice of strengths like appreciation of beauty, hope, gratitude or religiousness/spirituality.

Peterson and Seligman (2004) developed several instruments for the assessment of character strengths, such as the *Values in Action Structured Interview* (VIA-SI), the *Values in Action Rising to the Occasion Inventory* (VIA-RTO), the *Values in Action Inventory of Strengths* (VIA-IS; for an overview see Peterson and Seligman 2004), and the *Values in Action Inventory of Strengths for Youth* (VIA-Youth; Park and Peterson 2006a). Moreover, Park and Peterson (2006b) created a content-analysis system for the codification of character strengths from unstructured verbal material. The VIA-SI assesses whether a person displays a

specific strength or not. The VIA-RTO is especially designed to evaluate phasic strengths (i.e., those that are most likely to be displayed depending on the situation like showing bravery in a challenging situation), by asking individuals how often they were in a strength-relevant setting and then how they usually respond in that situation. Finally, the VIA-IS is a 240-item self-report questionnaire with 24 subscales of 10 items each, assessing the 24 character strengths. Peterson and Seligman (2004) reported alpha coefficients  $> .70$  for all scales, test-retest correlations  $> .70$  (across a period of 4 months), and that scores meaningfully varied (although they were skewed to the right). At the moment, the VIA-IS is considered the best-studied and standard instrument for the measurement of character strengths.

Beyond the intrinsic value of character strengths, several studies have shown that strengths are positively related to subjective and psychological well-being (e.g., Buschor, Proyer, and Ruch 2013; Güsewell and Ruch 2012; Leontopoulou and Triliva 2012; Park, Peterson, and Seligman 2004; Peterson, Park, and Seligman 2005; Peterson, Ruch, Beermann, Park, and Seligman 2007; Ruch et al 2010). Strengths have also been associated with other positive outcomes such as recovery from illness (Peterson, Park, and Seligman 2006), posttraumatic growth (Peterson, Park, Pole, D'Andrea, and Seligman 2008), health behaviors (Proyer, Gander, Wellenzohn, and Ruch 2013), physical and mental health (Leontopoulou and Triliva 2012), positive experiences at work and the feeling of calling (Harzer and Ruch 2012, 2013), or academic achievement (Peterson and Park 2009; Weber and Ruch 2012). Additionally, strengths interventions based on learning one's strengths and using them in new and different ways over a period of time was shown to be effective in increasing participants' well-being and decreasing their depressive symptoms in a period of up to six months (Gander, Proyer, Ruch and Wyss 2013; Seligman, Steen, Park, and Peterson 2005). Additionally, interventions targeting strengths that typically correlate most with life



satisfaction (e.g., curiosity, hope, or zest) were potent to increase life satisfaction in comparison with a wait-list control group and a group that trained strengths that typically correlate low with life satisfaction (e.g., creativity, love of learning, or perspective; Proyer, Ruch and Buschor 2013). This gain in life satisfaction was also associated with an increase in specific strengths (e.g., self-regulation). Hence, there is broad empirical support for the notion of a positive contribution of character strengths to different indicators of well-being.

However, most of the evidence on character strengths so far comes from cross-sectional studies. In order to overcome this limitation, large-scale longitudinal studies that assess the role of character strengths on well-being over time are needed. This is precisely one of the purposes of the NCCR-LIVES project (*Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research LIVES – Overcoming vulnerability: Life course perspectives*), funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. This project aims to study vulnerabilities and strengths, and their impact on the life of human beings over time. Several variables are evaluated in this project, and thus, the inclusion of short scales is a requirement. In fact, in such studies the total number of items that can be administered often is lower than the ones of the VIA-IS.

Due to this requirement, the goal of the present study is the development of a short instrument that assesses the 24 character strengths, as defined by Peterson and Seligman (2004), that involves a shorter completion time and that may be included in large, longitudinal surveys. In order to test the validity of the new scale, the convergence with the VIA-IS is evaluated in terms of descriptive statistics, relationships with life satisfaction and socio-demographic variables, and factor structure.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1. Participants**

The sample consisted of 211 German-speaking adults (34 men, 177 women), mainly from Germany ( $n = 147$ ), Switzerland ( $n = 43$ ) and Austria ( $n = 17$ ). Their average age was

40.63 years ( $SD = 13.06$ ; range 18-69 years). Most of the participants were married or in a relationship ( $n = 90$ ),  $n = 87$  were single,  $n = 31$  were separated or divorced, and  $n = 3$  were widowed. The sample was well educated: most of them had a university degree ( $n = 109$ ),  $n = 53$  indicated having an apprenticeship,  $n = 38$  had a school diploma allowing them to attend university,  $n = 8$  had completed secondary school, and  $n = 3$  had completed primary school.

## 2.2. Instruments

The *Character Strengths Rating Form (CSRF)* is a 24-item questionnaire with a 9-point Likert scale answer format (from 1 = “*not like me at all*” through 9 = “*absolutely like me*”) that measures the 24 character strengths. Each of the items of the CSRF describes one of the 24 strengths, and participants indicate the degree in which the strengths apply to them (see Appendix II)<sup>1</sup>. For example, the item assessing curiosity is: “Curiosity (interest, novelty-seeking, openness to experience): Curious people take an interest in all ongoing experience in daily life for its own sake and they are very interested in and fascinated by various topics and subjects. They like to explore and discover the world, they are seldom bored, and it’s easy for them to keep themselves busy.”

The *Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS; Peterson and Seligman 2004)* is a 240-item questionnaire with a 5-point Likert-scale answer format (from 1 = “*very much unlike me*” through 5 = “*very much like me*”) that measures the 24 character strengths. A sample item is “It is important to me that I live in a world of beauty” (appreciation of beauty and excellence). We used the German adaptation of the VIA-IS (Ruch et al. 2010), which has shown good validity and reliability. Internal consistencies of the scales were high (median  $\alpha = .77$ ), and so was the stability over 9 months (median test-retest  $r = .73$ ). This adaptation demonstrated good convergence of the standard self-rating form with a peer-rating form and

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<sup>1</sup> We present an English translation of the German items. The original German version is available by request to the first author.

is widely used in research (e.g., Güsewell and Ruch, 2012; Harzer and Ruch 2012, 2013; Proyer, Ruch, and Buschor 2013).

The *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin 1985) is a 5-item questionnaire that assesses self-reported life satisfaction, and uses a 7-point Likert scale (from 1 = “*strongly disagree*” through 7 = “*strongly agree*”). A sample item is “The conditions of my life are excellent.” The SWLS is widely used in research and shows good psychometric properties across different studies (e.g., Diener 1994; Diener, Nappa-Scollon, Oishi, Dzokoto, and Suh 2000). We used the German version of the SWLS used in the Ruch et al. (2010) study that was developed in a standardized translation-back-translation-procedure.

### **2.3. Procedure**

We approached approximately one thousand participants that completed the VIA-IS online (using a research website hosted by the first authors’ lab) within the past six months; 211 of these agreed to complete the CSRF. They also completed the SWLS and a short questionnaire on socio-demographic information.

The development of the Character Strengths Rating Form (CSRF) involved several steps. An initial version of the CSRF was developed using the descriptions given in Peterson and Seligman (2004) to describe low and high scorers in the respective strength. Answers were given on a 5-point Likert-scale answer format. After collecting first data with this version, the results showed that some of the correlations with the VIA-IS were lower than expected. Two reasons were identified. First, for some strengths the description of the scales did not match the item contents in the VIA-IS well. Therefore, the description of the high scorer was adjusted for a revised version. Second and more importantly, some scales of the rating form yielded mean scores that were too high (in the sense of ceiling effects), and thus there was a restricted variability in these scales. In an attempt to overcome these problems

two precautions were taken against restrictions in variance. Firstly, the answer format was expanded from a five- to a nine-point Likert-scale answer format. Secondly, all nine steps were verbally anchored to dissuade participants from systematically selecting the highest score<sup>2</sup>.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Descriptive statistics

We computed means, standard deviations, and the ranks of the means for the Character Strengths Rating Form (CSRF) and the VIA-IS to test their convergence. All coefficients are given in Table 1.

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Insert Table 1 about here

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Table 1 shows that answers in the CSRF ranged from 1 to 9 for all of the scales except for kindness (all  $\geq 3$ ), fairness, and gratitude (all  $\geq 2$ ). A first descriptive inspection of the rank order of the means of the strengths indicated high convergence; for example, curiosity was ranked highest in the CSRF and second highest in the VIA-IS, while love of learning was highest in the VIA-IS and second to highest in the CSRF; religiousness was ranked lowest in both measures. Overall, the correlation between the rank orders of the strengths was .85. The correlation of the means and standard deviations of the CSRF and the VIA-IS were .91 and .80, respectively.

Correlations among the character strengths measured by the CSRF and the VIA-IS are shown in Table 2. Correlations between corresponding strengths (diagonal, main axis) were between .41 and .77, and the median was .56. All strengths from the CSRF correlated higher with their corresponding strengths in the VIA-IS than with the remaining strengths of the

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<sup>2</sup> When developing the CSRF, we also developed a version that only anchored the extreme poles and the mid point of the scale. However, the current version outperformed this variant in several characteristics (e.g., convergence with the VIA-IS). Therefore, this variant was not further considered.

classification (i.e., corresponding off-diagonal correlation coefficients were numerically smaller than the diagonal coefficients in the respective rows and columns). This can be seen as support of the convergent and discriminant validity of the CSRF.

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Insert Table 2 about here

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### **3.2. Correlations with socio-demographic variables and life satisfaction**

In order to provide further evidence for the validity of the CSRF, the correlations of the strengths, as measured either with the CSRF or with the VIA-IS, with gender, age, educational level, and life satisfaction were computed and inspected for similarity (see Table 3). Additionally, the similarity of the two profiles (correlations of the VIA-IS scales and the CSRF ratings with the criterion) was expressed numerically by computing the correlation coefficient for the two profiles.

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Insert Table 3 about here

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Table 3 shows that strengths, measured with both the CSRF and the VIA-IS, did not systematically correlate with gender. For both scales, age was numerically most highly positively correlated with religiousness and most highly negatively with open-mindedness. The profiles of correlation coefficients between age and the character strengths were very comparable for the CSRF and the VIA-IS; the rank-order correlation was .74 and the Pearson correlation coefficient was .83. Curiosity and love of learning were the strengths with the strongest positive correlations with education and modesty had the highest negative correlations in both scales. Again, the profiles were very similar (i.e., rank-order correlation was .76; Pearson correlation was .83). Finally, hope, zest, and love followed by gratitude and curiosity were the strengths with the numerically strongest positive correlations with life

satisfaction and the profiles were highly similar (both rank-order and Pearson correlation were .84). This is also in line with earlier findings on correlation patterns between the 24 character strengths and life satisfaction (e.g., Buschor et al. 2013; Park and Peterson 2004; Peterson et al. 2007; Ruch et al. 2010). Results suggest that the relationships of the CSRF with different variables converge well with the ones shown for the VIA-IS, underscoring that the two instruments yielded comparable results. Therefore, these results represent additional evidence of construct validity of the new instrument.

Furthermore, we tested whether the correlation coefficients for the CSRF and the VIA-IS with gender, age, educational level, and life satisfaction differed significantly from each other using the procedure developed by Meng, Rosenthal and Rubin (1992). Results showed that only 8 out of the 96 pairs of correlations differed. Persistence ( $Z = 2.13, p = .02$ ), social intelligence ( $Z = 2.29, p = .01$ ), and appreciation of beauty ( $Z = 2.12, p = .02$ ) measured with the CSRF correlated significantly higher with age than the corresponding strengths measured with the VIA-IS. On the other hand, zest ( $Z = -3.74, p < .001$ ), love ( $Z = -2.35, p = .01$ ), gratitude ( $Z = -3.16, p < .001$ ), hope ( $Z = -2.25, p = .01$ ), and religiousness ( $Z = -3.57, p < .001$ ) measured with the VIA-IS correlated higher with life satisfaction than the corresponding strengths measured with the CSRF. The mean difference in the size of the correlations was .07, hence, being rather small. Overall, these analyses lend further support to the convergence of the correlation patterns found for the CSRF and the VIA-IS.

### **3.3. Factor structure**

In order to offer additional evidence for the validity of the new instrument, we compared the factor structure of the CSRF and the VIA-IS. Following the same procedure as in previous studies with the VIA-IS (e.g., Ruch et al. 2010), a principal components analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted with the 24 VIA-IS scales representing the 24 character strengths. The scree test suggested the extraction of five factors (first seven Eigenvalues:

8.66, 2.06, 1.69, 1.36, 1.13, 0.95, and 0.83) that explained 62.03% of the total variance.

Additionally, as in earlier studies (Peterson and Seligman 2004; Ruch et al. 2010), a five factor-solution (see Table 4) could be best interpreted. The five factors extracted were labeled as (1) *interpersonal strengths* (e.g., leadership, teamwork, kindness, forgiveness, fairness); (2) *intellectual strengths* (e.g., love of learning, creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness); (3) *emotional strengths* (e.g., zest, hope, bravery); (4) *strengths of restraint* (e.g., prudence, self-regulation, honesty); and (5) *theological strengths* (religiousness, gratitude, and appreciation of beauty).

These factor scores were correlated with the CSRF scores to obtain the loadings of the CSRF scores on the VIA-IS factors (in the sense of an extension analysis; see Dwyer 1937). In the subsequent analyses, Tucker's Phi congruence coefficients were computed to examine the convergence between the VIA-IS factor loadings on the five factors and the correlations of the CSRF with the five factors (i.e., the "loadings" of the CSRF items on the VIA-IS factors). Congruence coefficients were computed (a) for each of the 24 strengths to estimate the convergence of loadings across the factors and (b) for each of the factors to estimate the convergence of the loadings within a factor across the 24 strengths. The correlations of the CSRF with the VIA-IS factors and the Tucker's Phi congruence coefficients are presented in Table 4.

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Insert Table 4 about here

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Table 4 shows a very high correspondence between the factor structures of both instruments. Congruence coefficients for each of the 24 strengths yielded a median of .96. The congruence coefficient for each of the factors was .99, .92, .98, .95, and .93, for interpersonal strengths, intellectual strengths, emotional strengths, strengths of restraint, and theological strengths, respectively. These results indicated there was a very high convergence

between the loadings of the character strengths scales on a VIA-IS factor and the correlations of the corresponding items of the Character Strengths Rating Form with the same VIA-IS factor.

For a final examination of the convergence between the VIA-IS and the CSRF, the factor scores were intercorrelated (see Table 5).

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Insert Table 5 about here

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Table 5 shows robust positive relations between the homologous factors; the correlation coefficients ranged between .59 and .73. The correlation coefficients in the main axis were larger than any of the coefficients in the respective rows and columns. This can be seen as further support for the convergent and discriminant validity of the CSRF.

The strengths factors correlated differently with satisfaction with life. While intellectual strengths-factor was uncorrelated with the SWLS (VIA-IS:  $r = -.02$ ;  $p = .792$ , CSRF:  $r = .01$ ;  $p = .841$ ), the factor of emotional strengths was a very potent predictor (VIA-IS:  $r = .54$ ;  $p < .001$ , CSRF:  $r = .40$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Life satisfaction increased with interpersonal strengths (VIA-IS:  $r = .21$ ;  $p = .002$ , CSRF:  $r = .21$ ,  $p = .003$ ) and tended to decrease with strengths of restraint (VIA-IS:  $r = -.17$ ;  $p = .013$ ; CSRF:  $r = -.14$ ,  $p = .037$ ). For the theological strengths, the coefficients more different with  $r = .32$  ( $p < .001$ ) for the VIA-IS factor and  $r = .12$  ( $p = .089$ ) for the CSRF. Overall, the profile of correlations was similar with the rank-order correlation of the associations with life satisfaction being .90.

The internal consistencies of these factors were also calculated. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the scales of the VIA-IS resulting from the factors representing the interpersonal strengths, intellectual strengths, emotional strengths, strengths of restraint, and theological strengths were .86, .77, .83, .68, and .64 respectively. The alpha values of the same factors of the CSRF were .83, .74, .75, .62, and .53, respectively, which are smaller than



the reliabilities of the VIA-IS factors, but are sufficient for research purposes, especially in large-scale studies.

#### **4. Discussion**

This study contributes to research on character strengths by providing an initial evaluation of a short measure for the 24 strengths of the Values in Action classification of strengths (Peterson and Seligman 2004). Overall, the findings for the *Character Strengths Rating Form* (CSRF) are encouraging and lend support to the notion that this instrument can be used in large-scale studies (e.g., longitudinal studies) where only short instruments can be used for economical reasons. The CSRF was not developed for replacing the standard instrument in the field, the *Values in Action Inventory of Strengths* (VIA-IS), but to provide a short measure for specific research purposes.

The CSRF proved to be a valid measure of 24 character strengths of Peterson and Seligman's (2004) classification. Convergence with the VIA-IS in terms of similarity of the rank order of the means was established. Also, correlations between the corresponding strengths of both measures were robustly positive and in the expected range, especially if considering that the CSRF is only a single item measure.

Construct validity of the new instrument was further supported by demonstrating the convergence of the homologous scales with respect to their relation with life satisfaction, gender, age, and education. As expected, correlations with the single item measure (CSRF) were in specific cases lower than for the VIA-IS. However, these lower correlations were occasional, and pointed in the same direction than those of the VIA-IS. Overall, the majority of the relationships were similar in size. This result supports previous claims on the effectiveness of single-item measures (e.g., Brown and Grice 2011). Finally, high factor structure convergence was also demonstrated, which offers evidence of the factorial validity of the newly developed measure.

Overall, it is argued that the Character Strengths Rating Form can be used for a valid assessment of character strengths with single items. As mentioned earlier, it is by no means a substitute for VIA-IS and we strongly suggest its usage in standard settings. However, given specific constraints in the design of a study the CSRF may be an alternative. Hence, the CSRF may be used when the larger sample size compensates for the lack of power due to the lower reliability, as it is in the case of, for example, the mentioned NCCR-LIVES project. In this research project, the professional trajectories of individuals of a Swiss representative sample are analyzed, including unemployed persons and persons with migration background. Assessments are done in annual intervals over a period of seven years. Some of the questions that will be addressed in this project are how character strengths contribute to work positive outcomes (i.e., work satisfaction, work success); whether character strengths buffer against the negative impact of critical life events (such as unemployment) on subjective well-being; if character strengths are effective resources for successful coping with these critical life events; how stable are character strengths when studied longitudinally, and which factors can lead to changes in strengths.

*Limitations.* This study has several limitations. We only have data from a single sample and a cross-validation of the findings with a new data set seems warranted. Additionally, there are no data on the test-retest reliability of the CSRF as of yet. Furthermore, it would be desirable to provide further data on the validity of this rating form (beyond, for example, the reported convergence of relations with life satisfaction).

Overall, this initial evaluation of the CSRF is encouraging. It enables the economic study of character strengths in large-scale assessments such as longitudinal studies.

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Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics of the Character Strengths Rating Form (CSRF) and the VIA-IS*

		CSRF					VIA-IS				
Scales		<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>R</i>
1	Creativity	1	9	6.83	1.78	9	1.9	5.0	3.65	0.69	10
2	Curiosity	1	9	7.51	1.57	1	2.0	5.0	4.01	0.56	2
3	Open-mindedness	1	9	7.30	1.53	3	2.5	5.0	3.94	0.48	3
4	Love of learning	1	9	7.39	1.57	2	2.4	5.0	4.02	0.58	1
5	Perspective	1	9	6.61	1.58	13	2.4	4.9	3.60	0.48	13
6	Bravery	1	9	6.00	1.81	18	1.4	4.8	3.57	0.57	15
7	Persistence	1	9	6.39	1.77	16	1.8	4.7	3.42	0.58	20
8	Honesty	1	9	7.00	1.55	7	2.4	4.8	3.81	0.41	6
9	Zest	1	9	5.95	1.86	19	1.8	4.9	3.45	0.59	18
10	Love	1	9	6.82	1.99	10	1.2	5.0	3.76	0.65	7
11	Kindness	3	9	7.13	1.49	4	2.5	4.9	3.86	0.47	5
12	Social intelligence	1	9	7.05	1.72	6	2.2	4.9	3.73	0.5	8
13	Teamwork	1	9	5.94	2.04	20	1.9	4.8	3.60	0.54	12
14	Fairness	2	9	6.97	1.60	8	2.5	4.9	3.91	0.48	4
15	Leadership	1	9	6.30	2.01	17	2.2	4.9	3.65	0.51	11
16	Forgiveness	1	9	6.63	1.86	12	1.7	4.7	3.54	0.54	17
17	Modesty	1	9	5.58	1.96	22	1.4	4.5	3.15	0.57	23
18	Prudence	1	9	5.82	1.83	21	1.7	4.7	3.38	0.58	21
19	Self-regulation	1	9	5.47	1.95	23	1.8	4.8	3.21	0.57	22



20	Appreciation beauty	1	9	7.10	1.59	5	2.2	4.7	3.59	0.53	14
21	Gratitude	2	9	6.60	1.62	14	2.1	5.0	3.72	0.54	9
22	Hope	1	9	6.39	1.90	15	1.7	4.8	3.45	0.63	19
23	Humor	1	9	6.76	1.81	11	1.3	4.9	3.55	0.62	16
24	Religiousness	1	9	5.00	2.71	24	1.0	4.9	2.97	0.92	24

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*Note.*  $N = 211$ . CSRF = Character Strengths Rating Form. R = Rank of mean (1 indicates numerically highest mean and 24 indicates the numerically lowest mean of the scores in the CSRF and VIA-IS, respectively).

Table 2

*Intercorrelations Between the Items of the Character Strengths Rating Form (CSRF) and the VIA-IS Scales*

CSRF	VIA-IS																							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
1	.63	.31	.11	.28	.27	.37	.04	.16	.34	.09	.04	.16	.11	.21	.29	.12	-.08	-.01	.13	.29	.04	.25	.26	.24
2	.38	.50	.09	.37	.29	.33	.22	.15	.46	.30	.09	.26	.13	.20	.34	.11	-.06	-.03	.20	.27	.19	.39	.19	.20
3	.24	.26	.41	.22	.36	.18	.13	.20	.19	.18	.12	.17	.09	.19	.28	.11	-.07	.28	.21	.14	.13	.17	.19	.16
4	.27	.46	.19	.60	.19	.30	.13	.19	.32	.16	.02	.10	-.01	.10	.21	.09	.01	.01	.14	.20	.09	.26	.13	.12
5	.33	.24	.21	.18	.51	.30	.19	.20	.27	.27	.22	.40	.20	.20	.48	.20	-.09	.00	.22	.24	.04	.28	.21	.26
6	.34	.24	.05	.20	.25	.51	.10	.24	.33	.30	.10	.31	.18	.18	.44	.17	-.18	-.23	.09	.13	.09	.26	.15	.18
7	.20	.15	.09	.20	.18	.30	.55	.31	.32	.24	.10	.25	.19	.22	.41	.09	.04	.09	.28	-.05	.10	.27	.00	.05
8	.05	.01	.03	.10	.12	.24	.31	.47	.10	.18	.15	.19	.23	.22	.21	.15	.21	.18	.24	.01	.16	.10	.00	-.06
9	.27	.25	.04	.18	.20	.32	.29	.25	.58	.42	.21	.32	.25	.23	.40	.17	-.15	-.04	.19	.07	.25	.53	.28	.20
10	.19	.25	.07	.15	.24	.21	.20	.24	.33	.64	.37	.43	.38	.22	.33	.26	-.04	-.06	.12	.24	.31	.35	.25	.19
11	.07	.21	.00	.13	.08	.16	.15	.26	.26	.43	.52	.33	.36	.24	.24	.21	.10	.08	.05	.11	.40	.16	.25	.09
12	.24	.26	.18	.13	.40	.29	.18	.25	.32	.46	.40	.68	.38	.20	.43	.21	-.06	-.03	.12	.28	.26	.30	.25	.16

13	.08	.10	.03	.05	.17	.17	.32	.29	.22	.44	.34	.46	.65	.40	.38	.30	.25	.14	.09	.14	.29	.29	.29	.12
14	.10	.14	.13	.13	.12	.31	.23	.31	.17	.20	.25	.29	.35	.52	.33	.46	.31	.16	.15	.18	.29	.21	.17	.05
15	.31	.27	.09	.19	.36	.35	.29	.24	.41	.42	.33	.49	.49	.46	.68	.33	.04	.04	.18	.25	.25	.36	.25	.28
16	.04	.06	.09	.12	.16	.19	.17	.30	.21	.32	.27	.33	.29	.47	.26	.65	.22	.05	.23	.19	.30	.30	.18	.20
17	-.17	-.20	-.01	-.13	-.10	-.12	.13	.09	-.14	-.07	.08	.02	.19	.14	-.05	.10	.55	.27	.10	-.05	.19	-.02	-.06	-.02
18	.04	.01	.23	.07	.17	.02	.27	.26	.02	.12	.08	.09	.08	.18	.11	.08	.15	.45	.26	.10	.12	.01	.04	.11
19	.11	.10	.03	.19	.21	.27	.43	.32	.20	.27	.12	.28	.24	.20	.30	.14	.15	.20	.53	.08	.16	.22	.07	.12
20	.29	.29	.01	.12	.24	.07	.08	.13	.23	.20	.08	.20	.13	.19	.22	.15	-.06	.07	.05	.56	.28	.11	.14	.26
21	.13	.18	-.05	.15	.20	.18	.29	.23	.37	.41	.34	.30	.28	.32	.35	.25	.02	.17	.18	.26	.55	.30	.16	.30
22	.20	.23	.09	.22	.22	.34	.34	.21	.50	.37	.21	.33	.20	.23	.37	.21	-.11	-.04	.20	.08	.19	.64	.22	.16
23	.15	.18	.09	.05	.18	.18	.07	.15	.29	.30	.32	.31	.29	.23	.23	.19	-.06	.05	-.01	.13	.17	.31	.66	.09
24	.24	.20	.00	.15	.18	.23	.12	.16	.34	.26	.13	.26	.16	.26	.37	.23	-.05	.01	.08	.26	.32	.33	.17	.77

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*Note.*  $N = 211$ . CSRF = Character Strengths Rating Form. 1 = Creativity. 2 = Curiosity. 3 = Open-mindedness. 4 = Love of learning. 5 = Perspective. 6 = Bravery. 7 = Persistence. 8 = Honesty. 9 = Zest. 10 = Love. 11 = Kindness. 12 = Social Intelligence. 13 = Teamwork. 14 = Fairness. 15 = Leadership. 16 = Forgiveness. 17 = Modesty. 18 = Prudence. 19 = Self-regulation. 20 = Appreciation of beauty and excellence. 21 = Gratitude. 22 = Hope. 23 = Humor. 24 = Religiousness.

All correlations  $\geq .14$  were significant at a level of  $p < .05$ , all correlations  $\geq .18$  were significant at a level of  $p < .01$ .

Table 3

*Correlations Between Strengths, as Measured either with the Character Strengths Rating Form (CSRF) or with the VIA-IS, with Gender, Age, Education, and Life Satisfaction (SWLS)*

Scales	CSRF							VIA-IS						
	Gen	Age	RA	Edu	RE	SWL	RS	Gen	Age	RA	Edu	RE	SWL	RS
Creativity	-.01	.06	17	-.01	13	.15*	13	-.06	.01	18	-.02	14	.08	21
Curiosity	.03	.06	18	.15*	2	.27**	5	-.03	.11	8	.17*	1	.37**	5
Open-mindedness	.00	-.15*	24	.01	5	.07	19	-.07	-.10	24	.11	3	.12	19
Love of learning	.08	.07	16	.16*	1	.20**	8	-.04	.07	11	.17*	2	.17*	16
Perspective	-.03	.00	22	.00	6	.13	15	-.07	-.04	22	.01	10	.18**	15
Bravery	-.02	.13	9	-.05	17	.17*	11	-.11	.12	4	-.02	15	.28**	9
Persistence	-.06	.17*	5	-.01	12	.22**	6	-.04	.03	14	.00	11	.34**	6
Honesty	.03	.16*	7	-.12	23	.11	17	-.06	.06	12	-.21**	23	.08	22
Zest	.06	.08	14	-.06	19	.35**	3	-.03	-.02	21	-.04	17	.55**	2
Love	.08	.03	20	.00	10	.41**	2	.02	.02	16	.03	7	.53**	3
Kindness	.00	.17*	6	-.04	16	.17*	12	-.06	.11	6	-.10	21	.15*	17

Social intelligence	-.06	.13	8	.00	7	.22**	7	-.08	.01	19	.05	4	.30**	7
Teamwork	-.03	.08	15	.00	8	.20**	9	-.11	.05	13	-.01	13	.30**	8
Fairness	-.10	.13	11	.00	9	.04	22	-.06	.11	5	-.16*	22	.10	20
Leadership	-.11	.13	12	.01	4	.28**	4	-.11	.11	7	.01	9	.26**	10
Forgiveness	-.04	.19**	4	-.11	22	.11	18	-.03	.14*	3	-.06	19	.21**	14
Modesty	.02	.13	10	-.21**	24	.00	23	.00	.07	9	-.29**	24	-.09	24
Prudence	-.02	-.02	23	-.06	18	-.10	24	-.03	-.02	20	-.06	20	-.05	23
Self-regulation	-.01	.05	19	-.03	15	.12	16	-.07	.03	15	.04	5	.24**	12
Appreciation beauty	.00	.21**	3	.05	3	.05	21	-.04	.07	10	.02	8	.13	18
Gratitude	-.02	.21**	2	-.10	21	.18**	10	-.03	.18*	2	-.01	12	.38**	4
Hope	.04	.12	13	.00	11	.47**	1	.02	.02	17	.03	6	.58**	1
Humor	-.05	.01	21	-.02	14	.15*	14	-.04	-.09	23	-.03	16	.26**	11
Religiousness	-.12	.31**	1	-.09	20	.06	20	-.07	.25**	1	-.05	18	.23**	13

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*Note.*  $N = 211$ . Gen = Gender (1 = male; 2 = female). RA = Rank order of the correlation with age. Edu = Education (from 1 = without formal education through 7 = with a university degree). RE = Rank order of the correlation with education. RS = Rank order of the correlation with life satisfaction.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

Table 4

*Factor Loadings of the VIA-IS scales on the 5 Factors, Correlations of the Strengths of the Character Strengths Rating Form with the VIA-IS Factors, and Tucker's Phi Congruence Coefficients*

Scales	VIA-IS Factor loadings					r CSRF with VIA-IS Factors					Phi
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
Creativity	.08	<b>.62</b>	.25	-.08	.11	.07	<b>.69</b>	.34	-.13	.20	.99
Curiosity	.11	<b>.65</b>	.23	-.20	.20	.10	<b>.63</b>	.41	-.12	.40	.95
Open-mindedness	.06	<b>.66</b>	.07	.15	-.24	.06	<b>.70</b>	.15	.34	-.09	.96
Love of learning	-.03	<b>.61</b>	.25	.05	.11	-.04	<b>.74</b>	.15	.04	.25	.96
Perspective	<b>.36</b>	.35	.35	.02	-.11	.27	<b>.53</b>	.41	.14	-.07	.95
Bravery	.28	.21	<b>.63</b>	-.01	-.02	.27	.40	<b>.60</b>	-.11	.13	.94
Persistence	.16	-.01	<b>.57</b>	.41	-.02	.13	.14	<b>.72</b>	.26	.10	.93
Honesty	.30	.12	.23	<b>.36</b>	-.09	.33	.15	.28	<b>.54</b>	-.15	.99
Zest	.34	.10	<b>.74</b>	-.15	.29	.29	.13	<b>.79</b>	-.18	.41	.99
Love	<b>.61</b>	-.05	.41	-.16	.16	<b>.56</b>	.01	.49	-.19	.42	.95
Kindness	<b>.71</b>	-.07	.11	-.01	.10	<b>.72</b>	.08	.13	.10	.20	.96



Social intelligence	<b>.69</b>	.05	.32	-.06	-.03	<b>.59</b>	.26	.38	-.04	.08	.94
Teamwork	<b>.75</b>	-.22	.20	.12	-.05	<b>.75</b>	-.09	.22	.26	.07	.96
Fairness	<b>.56</b>	.03	.07	.34	.03	<b>.60</b>	.14	-.03	.43	.07	.98
Leadership	<b>.49</b>	.10	.48	-.01	.02	<b>.57</b>	.27	.38	.13	.17	.92
Forgiveness	<b>.44</b>	-.06	.10	.22	.23	<b>.49</b>	.05	.07	.27	.34	.97
Modesty	.13	-.22	-.05	<b>.70</b>	.18	.27	-.29	-.25	<b>.65</b>	.03	.93
Prudence	-.07	-.02	-.06	<b>.72</b>	.10	.05	.26	.03	<b>.76</b>	-.10	.89
Self-regulation	-.11	-.09	.43	<b>.59</b>	.12	.02	.15	.44	<b>.51</b>	.19	.92
Appreciation beauty	.18	.37	-.05	-.03	<b>.45</b>	.23	<b>.53</b>	.03	.02	.51	.98
Gratitude	.37	-.08	.20	.21	<b>.54</b>	.43	.13	.32	.04	<b>.69</b>	.93
Hope	.34	.00	<b>.66</b>	-.10	.33	.28	.12	<b>.77</b>	-.07	.40	.98
Humor	<b>.60</b>	.08	.21	-.16	.09	<b>.59</b>	.15	.35	-.24	.08	.98
Religiousness	.13	.02	.27	-.04	<b>.69</b>	.05	.16	.34	-.08	<b>.75</b>	.98
Tucker's Phi	.99	.92	.98	.95	.93						

*Note.*  $N = 211$ . Boldface indicates highest factor loadings of the scales.

Table 5

*Correlations between the 5 Factors of the VIA-IS and the 5 Factors of the Character Strengths Rating Form*

VIA-IS	Character Strengths Rating Form				
	1	2	3	4	5
1	.73***	-.06	.14*	-.07	.04
2	-.12	.59***	.01	-.13	-.04
3	-.03	.14*	.70***	-.07	.21**
4	-.04	-.10	-.20**	.66***	-.06
5	-.03	.08	-.06	-.07	.64***

*Note.*  $N = 211$ . 1 = “interpersonal strengths” 2 = “intellectual strengths”. 3 = “emotional strengths”. 4 = “strengths of restraint”. 5 = “theological strengths”.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

## Appendix I

*Classification of Six Core Virtues and 24 Strengths of Character*

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Virtue I. Wisdom and knowledge: cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge.

- (1) Creativity: thinking of novel and productive ways to do things
- (2) Curiosity: taking an interest in all of ongoing experience
- (3) Open-mindedness: thinking things through and examining them from all sides
- (4) Love of learning: mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge
- (5) Perspective: being able to provide wise counsel to others

Virtue II. Courage: emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal.

- (6) Bravery: not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain
- (7) Persistence: finishing what one starts
- (8) Honesty: speaking the truth and presenting oneself in a genuine way
- (9) Zest: approaching life with excitement and energy

Virtue III. Humanity: interpersonal strengths that involve “tending and befriending” others.

- (10) Love: valuing close relations with others
- (11) Kindness: doing favors and good deeds for others
- (12) Social intelligence: being aware of the motives and feelings of self and others

Virtue IV. Justice: civic strengths that underlie healthy community life.

- (13) Teamwork: working well as member of a group or team
- (14) Fairness: treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice
- (15) Leadership: organizing group activities and seeing that they happen

Virtue V. Temperance: strengths that protect against excess.

- (16) Forgiveness: forgiving those who have done wrong
- (17) Modesty: letting one’s accomplishments speak for themselves
- (18) Prudence: being careful about one’s choices; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted
- (19) Self-regulation: regulating what one feels and does

Virtue VI. Transcendence: strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning.

- (20) Appreciation of beauty and excellence: noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in all domains of life
  - (21) Gratitude: being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen
  - (22) Hope: expecting the best and working to achieve it
  - (23) Humor: liking to laugh and joke; bringing smiles to other people
  - (24) Religiousness: having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of life
-

## Appendix II

**Character Strength Rating Form**

The following 24 statements reflect characteristics that many people would find desirable, but we want you to answer only in terms of whether the statement describes what you are like. Please be honest and accurate! Please do not describe yourself as someone you aspire to be but as you actually are.

Please use the following rating scheme: -4 = very much unlike me, -3 = rather unlike me, -2 = somewhat unlike me, -1 = slightly unlike me, 0 = neither nor, 1 = slightly like me, 2 = somewhat like me, 3 = rather like me, 4 = very much like me

**Creativity (originality, ingenuity):**

Creative people have a highly developed thinking about novel and productive ways to solve problems and often have creative and original ideas. They do not content themselves with conventional solutions if there are better solutions.

**Curiosity (interest, novelty-seeking, openness to experience):** Curious people take an interest in all ongoing experience in daily life for its own sake and they are very interested in and fascinated by various topics and subjects. They like to explore and discover the world, they are seldom bored, and it's easy for them to keep themselves busy.

**Judgment & Open-Mindedness (critical thinking):** People with a highly developed judgment think things through, like to question thoughts and beliefs, and examine them from all sides. They do not jump to conclusions and build on facts while making decisions. They are able to change their mind in light of evidence.

**Love of Learning:** Curious people and those who are willing to learn like to master new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge and are excited about learning. They add new skills and abilities or expand existing knowledge.

**Perspective (wisdom):** People with this strength are considered as being wise and are asked for advice by others. They see the big picture and a mature view on life.

**Bravery (valor):** Brave and courageous people do not shrink from threat, challenge, difficulty or pain. They speak up for their opinions and convictions even if there is opposition.

**Perseverance (persistence, industriousness):** Persistent and industrious people finish what they start, even in spite of obstacles. They do not allow themselves to be distracted by inner or outer factors and take pleasure in completing tasks.

**Honesty (authenticity, integrity):** Honest people speak the truth but more broadly and present themselves in a genuine way and act in a sincere way. They have both feet planted firmly on the ground and are without pretense.

**Zest (vitality, enthusiasm, vigor, energy):** Zestful people pursue their goals with a lot of energy and enthusiasm. They do not do things halfway or halfheartedly, they love what they do and look forward to every new day. They live life as an adventure.

**Capacity to Love and Be Loved:** People with a highly developed capacity to love and a secure attachment value close relations with others, in particular those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated.

**Kindness (generosity, nurturance, care, compassion, altruistic love, "niceness"):** Kind and generous people like doing favors and good deeds for others. They appreciate being generous and nice to others.

**Social Intelligence (emotional intelligence, personal intelligence):** Socially competent people are aware of the motives and feelings of other people as well as themselves and they know what to do to fit into different social situations.

**Teamwork (citizenship, social responsibility, loyalty):** People with highly developed teamwork skills work well as a member of a group or team. They are loyal to the group and consider being a team member as a central factor.

**Fairness:** Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice is a central principle of fair people. They do not let personal feelings bias decisions about others and give everyone a fair chance.

**Leadership:** People with highly developed leadership encourage a group (of which one is a member) to get things done, while at the same time maintaining good relations within the group and treating everyone equally. They are able to organize group activities and see that they happen.

**Forgiveness & Mercy:** People with this strength have an easier time forgiving those who have done wrong. They give people a second chance. Being merciful and not being vengeful is their principle.

**Modesty & Humility:** Modest people do not seek the spotlight and do not regard themselves as more special than they are. They let their accomplishments speak for themselves. Others would describe them as modest and humble.

**Prudence:** Prudent people think carefully about the consequences of their choices before acting. They do not say or do things that might later be regretted.

**Self-Regulation (self-control):** People with a highly developed self-regulation are able to regulate what they feel and do. They are able to control different areas of life (appetite, emotions etc.) and are very disciplined.

**Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence (awe, wonder, elevation):** People with this strength notice and appreciate things. They are highly interested in beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in various domains of life (from nature to art to mathematics to science to everyday experience).

**Gratitude:** Grateful people are aware of and thankful for the good things that happen to them. Others describe them as being grateful, because they always take time to express thanks.

**Hope (optimism, future-mindedness, future orientation):** Optimistic people expect the best in the future; they believe that a good future is something that can be brought about. They hope for the best and work to achieve their goals.

**Humor (playfulness):** People with this strength like to laugh, tease and bring smiles to other people. They try to see the light side in various situations.

**Religiousness & Spirituality (faith, purpose):** Religious or spiritual people have coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of the universe. Their religious beliefs about the meaning of life shape their conduct and provide comfort and strength.

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